

**Location**

Chiapas and Mexico City [Mexico],
New York City [USA]

Field

Coefficient of art, Deactivate [art's
aesthetic function]

Strategy

Alternative Economy, Right to the
land

Users

Zapatista farmers, coffee drinkers

Maintained by

The project was self-initiated, and it is self-funded by the artists. The coffee circulates mainly around art and social justice events in NYC; coffee is also sold door-to-door in the city; the project is additionally financed by Spacebank, an ongoing art project and virtual community investment bank founded by Ilich in 2005.

Duration

2015 - ongoing

Category

urban-development, economy,
environment, social

Nr. and Title

U 249

Diego de la Vega Coffee Co-op

Initiator(s)

Fran Ilich

Description

The Diego de la Vega Coffee Co-op offers organic coffee sourced locally in Chiapas from Zapatista autonomous farms. The coffee is stored and packed in Tijuana; then, it is shipped to New York City to be distributed mostly at art & culture and social justice-related events where Ilich and his collaborators engage in a conversation and training about experimental economics models. The artist also organises a door-to-door distribution in Brox, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. The Co-op trades the coffee using alternative currencies, barter of time deposits and accepts voluntary money donations as well. Proceeds are used to buy more coffee from the autonomous Zapatista rebels.

Context

The Zapatistas plant coffee in the mountains and the jungles of Chiapas as a way to fund their activities. Through its bartering in NYC, Ilich enabled the product's circulation and ideas about alternative ways of exchanging products within the economic system.

How to use it

Users who drink coffee can engage in conversations and training about alternative economic systems that infiltrate and work within capitalism.

Goals

The project uses coffee as an excuse to create a sustainable way to fund the production of coffee without exploiting Zapatista farms, to create a network based on solidarity between farmers in Chapas, service industry labourers and users and in New York City mediated by the artist and his collaborators.

Beneficial outcomes

The exchange of coffee allows the sustainability of the production in Chiapas, and at the same time, it avoids large-scale exploitation of both land and farmers.

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Coefficient of Arte Util

80%